

Docket Number: 1256-002-PWH
Application No. 10/070,570
Election

Listing of Claims:

1 – 15 (canceled)

16. (previously presented) A process for packaging a food product comprising:

- a) advancing a base web of thermoformable material to a forming station and thermoforming a portion of the web at the forming station into at least one pot; and
- b) transferring the web with formed pot to a filling station and filling the pot with the food product;
at the same time
- c) advancing a top web to a punching station and punching at least one product dispensing aperture in the web;
and thereafter conducting the further steps of
- d) bringing the base and top webs together in register so that an area of top web defining a lid and having the punched aperture therein overlies a mouth of a filled pot and sealing the lid to the pot to form a food package;
- e) advancing the package or packages to a cooling chamber and holding them suspended therein until the product in the package has solidified; and
- f) fixing a sealing member over the aperture at any point after step c.

17. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16 in which more than one pot is formed in the web at a time.

18. (previously presented) A process according to claim 17 in which a row, column or array of pots is formed at each pass of the forming station and simultaneously a corresponding number of lids is formed in the top web.

19. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16 in which the pot is deformable toward the lid to dispense the food product through the aperture in the lid and the lid or a portion thereof is provided with sufficient rigidity to enable the pot to be collapsed against it.

20. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16 in which the top web is thermoformed to fabricate it into a truncated dome-shaped lid and the aperture is formed in the planer surface of the dome.

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21. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16 in which the aperture is shaped so as to impart a desired cross-sectional shape to product extruded through the aperture.

22. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16 in which the pot is deformable toward the lid to dispense the food product through the aperture in the lid and a rigid insert is provided intermediate the lid and the food product in the pot to provide a bearing surface against which the pot can be collapsed, the insert having a dispensing opening in register with the aperture of the lid to enable the food product to be dispensed therethrough.

23. (previously presented) A process according to claim 22 in which the dispensing opening is shaped so as to impart a desired cross-sectional shape to product extruded through the opening.

24. (previously presented) A process according to claim 22 in which a shoulder is formed adjacent the mouth of the pot for receiving the insert.

25. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16 in which the packages are separated from the webs after the sealing of the aperture by cutting the area of webs between adjacent packages or groups of packages.

26. (previously presented) A process according to claim 16 in which the areas between adjacent packages and/or groups of packages is scored to enable individual packages or groups of packages to be snapped apart.

27. (withdrawn) Apparatus for conducting a process according to claim 16, including a first forming station for forming a pot in a first web of thermoformable material, a second forming station for forming an apertured lid in a second web of thermoformable material, a filling station for filling a food product into a formed pot, a sealing station for sealing the lid to the pot and a station for fixing a sealing member over the aperture in the lid to close and seal the food in the so-formed package.

28. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 27 including a picking station for placing a rigid insert into the filled pot prior to the application of the lid.

29. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 28 in which the first forming station includes means for forming a shoulder in the pot for receiving the insert.

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30. (withdrawn) A package for a food product which is flowable at point of consumption, the package comprising a pot for holding the food product and an apertured lid through which the food product is dispensable, the pot being formed of a flimsy material and being collapsible toward the lid to dispense the food product through the aperture of the lid, the package including a bearing surface to enable the pot to be collapsed against the lid, the bearing surface comprising a rigid insert placed intermediate the food product and the lid, the insert having a dispensing opening in register with the aperture of the lid to permit the food product to be dispensed therethrough.

31. (previously presented) A process according to claim 17 in which the pot is deformable toward the lid to dispense the food product through the aperture in the lid and the lid or a portion thereof is provided with sufficient rigidity to enable the pot to be collapsed against it.

32. (previously presented) A process according to claim 18 in which the pot is deformable toward the lid to dispense the food product through the aperture in the lid and the lid or a portion thereof is provided with sufficient rigidity to enable the pot to be collapsed against it.

33. (previously presented) A process according to claim 17 in which the top web is thermoformed to fabricate it into a truncated dome-shaped lid and the aperture is formed in the planer surface of the dome.

34. (previously presented) A process according to claim 18 in which the top web is thermoformed to fabricate it into a truncated dome-shaped lid and the aperture is formed in the planer surface of the dome.

35. (previously presented) A process according to claim 19 in which the top web is thermoformed to fabricate it into a truncated dome-shaped lid and the aperture is formed in the planer surface of the dome.

36. (previously presented) A process according to claim 17 in which the aperture is shaped so as to impart a desired cross-sectional shape to product extruded through the aperture.

37. (previously presented) A process according to claim 18 in which the aperture is shaped so as to impart a desired cross-sectional shape to product extruded through the aperture.

38. (previously presented) A process according to claim 19 in which the aperture is shaped so as to impart a desired cross-sectional shape to product extruded through the aperture.

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39. (previously presented) A process according to claim 20 in which the aperture is shaped so as to impart a desired cross-sectional shape to product extruded through the aperture.

40. (previously presented) A process according to claim 17 in which the pot is deformable toward the lid to dispense the food product through the aperture in the lid and a rigid insert is provided intermediate the lid and the food product in the pot to provide a bearing surface against which the pot can be collapsed, the insert having a dispensing opening in register with the aperture of the lid to enable the food product to be dispensed therethrough.

41. (previously presented) A process according to claim 18 in which the pot is deformable toward the lid to dispense the food product through the aperture in the lid and a rigid insert is provided intermediate the lid and the food product in the pot to provide a bearing surface against which the pot can be collapsed, the insert having a dispensing opening in register with the aperture of the lid to enable the food product to be dispensed therethrough.

42. (previously presented) A process according to claim 23 in which a shoulder is formed adjacent the mouth of the pot for receiving the insert.